

one of the newer airports in America. And, as the home of Tyndall Air Force Base, Naval Support Activity Panama City, and more than 22,000 veterans, Bay County enjoys a rich military history.

On this date, April 24, 2013, the day of Bay County's centennial, I am proud to join with friends, neighbors, and local and county officials from Panama City, Panama City Beach, Lynn Haven, Springfield, Parker, Callaway, Mexico Beach, and the unincorporated areas of our county to celebrate our proud past and bright future.

HONORING JACK AND VIOLET  
HAROUNIAN

HON. STEVE ISRAEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, April 24, 2013*

Mr. ISRAEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Jack and Violet Harounian, Dinner Chairpersons of the Aleh Foundation Awards Dinner.

Aleh Foundation's distinguished Dinner Chairperson Jack Harounian was born in Teheran, Iran in 1928. Jack had hoped to attend Teheran University Medical School to help the local Jewish community but was accepted in Dental College. Because of the outbreak of World War II and the very difficult day to day economic situation, he was not able to attend. At age 18, after passing exams, Mr. Harounian became the youngest staff member of the Imperial Bank of Iran office in Teheran. At age 20, he volunteered to attend the War Faculty and became a Battalion Officer of King Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi. In that position Jack served for 18 months in "Padeghan Jay" near Mehrabad Airport in Teheran. He then returned to the bank at a higher position until Prime Minister Dr. Mohammad Mosaddegh nationalized the banking and oil industry in Iran. Jack got married in 1957 to his lovely bride Violet Ohebshalom at the age of 29 in Tehran and they enjoyed a honeymoon in Israel in 1957. Today they are blessed with two daughters, one son and 11 grandchildren.

Mr. Harounian moved the family to the U.S. in 1970. After he started a business importing woolen piece goods, then shifted to become an exporter of handmade oriental rugs. After three decades he became one of the largest rug exporters in the U.S. At age 20, when the State of Israel was established, and later, at the time of their honeymoon, Jack began to think how he could help the people of Israel and Jews around the world. Some 25 years ago he decided to help hospitals and upgrade the quality of health-care services in Israel. In 1980 he organized and led fund raising efforts on behalf of Magen David Hospital in Calcutta, India.

In 1990, Violet miraculously survived a very serious illness. In the words of Jack, "G-d gave me back my wife." In appreciation, he agreed to become the International Chairman of Iranian Friends of Shaare Zedek Medical Center in Jerusalem. In that position, Mr. Harounian began to raise funds for Shaare Zedek, not just in New York but across the country and around the world. In all of these trips he had the warm support and encouragement of Violet who is deeply proud of her husband's efforts to care for the sick and disabled in Israel.

He has worked tirelessly on behalf of Shaare Zedek, year after year, putting in countless hours of time each week. At his own expense, Mr. Harounian has placed ads in all major Persian language news media in New York and Los Angeles as well as in the Jewish Week and Jerusalem Post. Jack takes his responsibility as International Chairman very seriously. On behalf of Shaare Zedek he has travelled to Boston, Washington D.C., Chicago, Miami, and overseas to Germany, Switzerland, France, Australia, New Zealand, England and Spain to meet with members of the local Persian Jewish community. Jack has personally paid for all hotels and air expenses for himself and his wife.

In recognition of his exceptional activities which have greatly benefited the health and well-being of the people of Jerusalem, Jack was honored at the Iranian Community Solidarity Gala Dinner Dance in celebration of Jerusalem's 2000 birthday in 1996, sponsored by Shaare Zedek.

This was followed two years later by Mr. Harounian being designated by Prime Minister Ehud Olmert a "Trustee of the City of Jerusalem" at festivities in Jerusalem celebrating Israel's 50th birthday. This is a special, rare honor of distinction that is presented to those individuals outside Israel who have made an exceptional contribution toward the betterment of the people of Jerusalem.

Because of his widespread reputation as a philanthropist supporting Israel, Jack was approached by the Aleh Foundation in 2001. He was deeply moved to hear about the dream of building a Rehabilitation Village. The estimated cost of the project was a daunting \$45 million.

After visiting the Aleh Center in Jerusalem and meeting with our special children and talking with the exceptional staff, Mr. Harounian threw himself wholeheartedly into this endeavor. Jack was kind enough to open his beautiful home in Kings Point for a fund-raising event that featured Prime Minister Ehud Olmert as the guest speaker. Mr. Harounian is an esteemed honorary board member. He makes it a priority to participate in all of the Aleh Foundation's fund raising events in NY and in Israel and spends an enormous amount of time introducing friends, neighbors and business associates to the vital work of the Foundation.

Over the years Mr. Harounian has devoted countless hours of his time, energy and money to helping Aleh expand its extraordinary facilities while continuing his wonderful work for Shaare Zedek and many other worthy causes in Israel. When asked why he worked so hard on behalf of the Aleh Foundation, Mr. Harounian replied, "It is wonderful that 12,000 parents can go to work each day with peace of mind, knowing that the Aleh Foundation, with its excellent and caring staff is taking care of their disabled children."

Mrs. Violet Harounian, besides warm support and encouragement, donated a very special ambulance to Magen David Adom in 1900 to Israel. She is active, in many other non-profit organizations in Israel such as Hadasah and Ort and so on. It is a distinct honor and a privilege to have Jack and Violet serve as Dinner Chairpersons of Aleh Foundation Awards Dinner celebrating 29 years of service to disabled children in Israel.

MATT LEWIS

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, April 24, 2013*

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Matt Lewis for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. Matt Lewis is an 8th grader at Moore Middle School and received this award because his determination and hard work have allowed him to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Matt Lewis is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Matt Lewis for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt he will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of his future accomplishments.

HONORING MR. GEORGE J. PAPPAS

HON. C.A. DUTCH RUPPERSBERGER

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, April 24, 2013*

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. Mr. Speaker, I rise before you today on behalf of myself, Representative CONAWAY from Texas, Representative LOBIONDO from New Jersey, Representative NUNES from California, Mr. ROGERS from Michigan, and Representative THORNBERRY from Texas to honor Mr. George J. Pappas, Professional Staff Member of the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence and retired United States Army Lieutenant Colonel.

During his time with the House Intelligence Committee, Mr. Pappas traveled extensively on bi-partisan congressional delegations, leading world-wide congressional trips for individual Members of Congress and group delegations. He has specific knowledge and expertise in engaging partner allies and emerging democracies from Eastern Europe, East Asia, and Western Africa. He advised bipartisan Members of the House on issues related to national security, cyber security, nuclear non-proliferation, global conflict, military intelligence operations, and institutional organizations within the Department of Defense.

Before serving as an exceptional policy advisor, he dedicated 24 years to active military service, holding a number of command and staff assignments including Deputy Commander United States Special Operation Command—Korea and Chief of Civil Affairs, United States Forces Korea. He also served as Operations Officer, Company Commander and Special Forces Detachment Command, 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne); and Battery Commander and Brigade Fire Support Office in the 82nd Airborne Division.

His awards and decorations include the Legion of Merit, Bronze Star Medal, two Defense Meritorious Service Medals, three Meritorious Service Medals, Joint Service Commendation Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Joint